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D O C T O R M A T Y,
Secretary of the Royal Society.



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DOCTOR MATY,

Secretary of the Royal Society ;

C O N T A I N I N G

An Abstract of the relations of travellers of different nations, concerning the PATAGONIANS ; with a more particular account of the several discoveries of the latest French and English navigators, relative to this gigantic race of men ; including a full reply to the objections made to their existence.

By ABBÉ COYER, F. R. S.

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L E T T E R
T O

DOCTOR MATY,
Secretary of the Royal Society.

S I R,

I HAVE received your answer
respecting the Patagonian giants
that have been seen by your navigators.
I am not ignorant of the delicacy of
your disposition with regard to truth.
The most scrupulous persons in the
world, however, might believe as much

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as you ; not that I see there is so much harm in giving a little credit to the giants, who are perhaps a much better sort of people than certain men of less stature, who cannot live peaceably one among another.

In reflecting on the reception which this piece of news met with at Paris, I cannot but admire how much our nation, which yours still accuses of credulity, is altered. Our ancestors, I confess, even after the revival of the sciences, believed in a number of absurdities; such as their talismans, magic rings, and waxen figures, that being pricked with pins communicated mortal stabs to one's enemies; in the devils of Loudun, apparitions, horoscopes, and astrological predictions; and of the latter, those particularly

cularly which concerned Henry IV. and are gravely related by De Thou, and the great Duke of Sully. You will tell me also, that even in the time of Louis XIV. after the appearance of a Galileo in Italy, a Bacon in England, a Montaigne and a Descartes in France, it was deemed heretical to believe in the diurnal revolution of the earth; nor can I deny that in the year 1666, the whole kingdom was alarmed with the expectations of Antichrist, on no better foundation than the prophecies of an idle dreamer of the North; or that in 1680, our dread of the comet was so great and universal, that it was by no means safe to speak against it.

But those times, Doctor, are now no more.

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At present our understandings are arrived at maturity, and we will no longer be made dupes : nay, we are hardly to be convinced now by the strongest proofs. Of this, the history of the Patagonian giants, which we still conceive to be fabulous, is a striking example. This circumstance of natural history seems nevertheless to merit some attention, as much at least as the cockleshells and butterflies of our fashionable cabinets.

In the year 1519, according to the relation of Antony Pigafeta, the Spaniards, under the conduct of the celebrated Magellan, saw giants in St. Julian's bay (lat. $49\frac{1}{2}$) so very tall that the said Spaniards hardly reached up to their girdle. They were armed with
bows

bows and arrows and cloathed with skins.

Bartholomew Leonard d'Argensola, in the first book of his history of the conquest of the Moluccas, relates that Magellan took some of these giants; who were above fifteen palms high, that is to say, ten feet and a half; but that they soon died for want of their customary nourishment.

The same historian (book the third) farther says, that the crew of Samiento's ships fought with men above three *varri*, viz. about eight feet, high: that at first they repulsed the Spaniards; but being afterwards terrified by their musquetry, were put to flight.

We meet with a similar relation in the voyage of Sebald de Wert, who, being at anchor with five ships, in Green Bay, within the Straits of Magellan, in the year 1599, saw seven pirogues or canoes, full of giants, from ten to eleven feet high; that his Dutchmen fought with them, and that their fire-arms so terrified them that they ran and plucked up the trees by the roots to shelter themselves from the musquet balls.

Oliver de Noort, who entered the same straits some months after Sebald, saw men from ten to eleven feet high, although he had seen others of the common size.

We have long had these relations before us; but we told the Spaniards that
nature

nature had furnished them with micro-
 scopic eyes, and exaggerating imagina-
 tions; witness those gigantic books of
 knight-errantry, which had their origin
 among them. To the Dutch we said,
 “ You are a set of honest well-meaning
 “ people; but the Spaniards, then your
 “ masters and instructors, under whose
 “ direction you fought in the straits of
 “ Magellan, have so often and so ear-
 “ nestly told you, that you saw and
 “ fought with giants, that you thought it
 “ best at last rather to believe their eyes
 “ than your own: and indeed we are
 “ so much the more authorised to reject
 “ your relations, as Monsieur de Gen-
 “ nes, one of our own navigators, in
 “ his voyage to the South Sea, in 1695,
 “ saw nothing at all of any giants.”

Of this we are assured by Froger, who was on the spot, and has given an account of the voyage. "We saw the savages, says this writer, (page 100) for the first time in the Straits of Magellan. They are of an olive colour, stout and good sized men: they have long black hair, cut in the form of a crown at the top of the head: they are accustomed to whiten their face, arms, and many other parts of their bodies with paint: they have no religion, and live a careless, wandering life, having no settled habitation. Such are the Patagonians, which some authors affirm to be eight or ten feet high, and of which they have told such exaggerated stories; the tallest of them not being six."

So positive an assertion as this, sunk the giants into oblivion. But in 1713, they were reproduced by some new testimony: and in this they differed from the fabulous giants of antiquity, who never made their appearance in the world after they were defeated by the thunderbolts of Jupiter. The Patagonians have occasionally reappeared to the navigators of various nations. Monsieur Frezier, engineer in ordinary to the King, made a voyage to the South Seas: in his account of which, after having given the civil and natural description of Chili, he proceeds thus. “ In the more inland parts of the country there is another nation of Indian giants, whom the Chonos call the Caucahues; and who, living in amity with the Chonos, frequently accompany them in their visits to the Spanish

Spanish settlements at Chiloe. Don Pedro Molina, who had been governor of this island, as well as other people who had been in the country, assured me, they had seen some of them near four *varri*, that is, between nine and ten feet high. These are the Patagians, who inhabit the eastern coasts of the desert, and have been frequently mentioned by voyagers. Notwithstanding which, their existence has been since thought fabulous; because other nations of Indians of the ordinary stature have been also seen in the Straits of Magellan. This is what deceived Froger, in his relation of the voyage of Monsieur de Gennes; for there have been ships that have seen both kinds of people in the same voyage."

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This recital did not much disconcert people, versed in the art of scepticism. It is but the old story, said they, transmitted very naturally from father to son, among the Spaniards.

But to proceed with Mr. Frezier's Narrative, in which the French are presently introduced upon the scene. " In the month of July, says he, in the year 1704, the crew of the *Jacques* of St. Malo, commanded by Capt. Harinton, saw seven of these giants in Gregory's bay. That of the *St. Pierre* of Marseilles, commanded by Capt. Carman of St. Malo, saw six of them ; among whom they observed one that seemed to wear evident marks of superiority. His hair was tucked up under a kind of fillet made of birds-gut,

gut, and stuck with plumes of feathers. Their dress was a kind of sack, made of the skin of a wild beast, with the hairy side inwards. On one arm was slung their quiver of arrows, some of which they gave to the crew, whom they likewise assisted to run their boat ashore. The sailors offered them bread, wine and brandy, but they refused to taste either. The next morning they saw above two hundred of them in a body." What I have here said, continues he, " I had upon the evidence of creditable witnesses; and it is so conformable to what we read in the accounts given us by the most celebrated travellers, that one may be justified, I think, in believing that there really exists in that part of America, a nation, or people, far surpassing ours in stature. The circumstantial

circumstantial accounts we have received of them, as well with regard to time and place as to several other particulars; seem to carry with them sufficient marks of veracity, to remove our natural prejudices to the contrary. The rarity of the sight may perhaps have occasioned some exaggeration in the different accounts we have had of their absolute height : but if we reflect that these were taken immediately from the senses, and are not the result of accurate admeasurement, we shall have reason to think them all nearly the same."

I know not how Mr. Frezier was received on his return to Paris, with his resurrection of the giants. At present, what the officers of our marine would
say

say to him is pretty obvious. "The Jacques of St. Malo, and the St. Pierre of Marseille! Are these your authorities? Pretty observers truly! Not a soul on board had the honour of the King's commission!"

Add to all this, you know, Doctor, that if there be some few persons in the world, who pursue a discovery through the intricacies attending difference of relation, and succession of time, which in the end conduct them to truth, the greater part of mankind attend to it only as the news of the day. It is a nine days wonder, curiosity is satisfied, and it is talked of no more.

Thus in the present instance, from the days of Mr. Frezier, till the month
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of July 1766, we had the consolation implicitly to believe, that there existed no greater men in nature than ourselves. In saying *we*, however, I mean personally to except myself; who cannot say I was so totally free from the suspicion of the existence of giants: for, in the year 1764, as I was on my return from Italy, by the way of Marseilles, and being always upon the inquiry, and looking out for information, I fell in, by accident, with an ocular witness to the existence of the Patagonian giants. This was Captain Reinaud, the first seaman perhaps who ventured to sail in a common tartan from Marseilles to the Straits of Magellan. My conversation with this personage was interesting, but I shall relate here only that part of it which concerns the point in question.

Having

Having inquired about the savages of the country, he intermixed his description with that of the giants. Oh ! said I, captain, (interrupting him) giants ! that can't be.—“ Can't be ! (returned he, with some bluntness) thus it is people talk that have seen nothing.”—But are you sure, Captain, that your eyes were wide open ?—“ Very open, and very good ; and yet I don't always trust them ; in this case I took measure.”—Well, and how tall were your giants ?—“ Twelve *pans*, that is, nine feet, a little more or less ; women and children in proportion.”—And whereabouts did you see them ?—“ Near the Straits of Magellan, where I went ashore for water.”—You was not the only person, I suppose, that saw these prodigies ?—“ No, certainly ; part of my
ship's

ship's company saw them and measured them, as well as myself."——In what year was this?—"In the year 1712."——And did you not inquire a little into the manners and customs of these giants?—"A pretty question truly! You people, that have nothing to do, imagine that a seaman on a trading voyage has time to throw away on such trifles. I was in haste to proceed on my route: the only thing that struck me was their civility; they must certainly have been used to see little men, and therefore are not afraid of them."——I asked him some farther questions relating to the country of Magellan, and he answered them agreeably to the accounts of the most creditable navigators. Notwithstanding the justness of his replies, I looked upon him earnestly, to see if

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I could discover nothing crazy in his looks, that might betray his head to be a little turned : but the contrast between his age and vigour surprized me almost as much as his story. Though upwards of fourscore years of age, he seemed to be hardly sixty ; *cruda viro, viridisque senectus* ; his mind appearing as vigorous as his body ; so that he is perhaps still living. Not being as yet perfectly satisfied, however, I inquired about the town into his general character, which I found to be a very respectable one, and that no body had made more successful voyages, because no body knew better how to calculate their events.

I had determined to publish this anecdote, in my account of my voyage to Italy ; the publication of which, however, is itself pre-

prevented, by the accounts of other travellers that have been published of the same country. Add to this, that it is not always proper to represent things in the light we have seen them. There are people in the world, of power and reputation, who are displeased if other people do not see exactly as they do. I have indeed sometimes taken the measure of their eyes, with an intent to adjust my own to their standard; but I no sooner took up my pen to write, than I always forgot it. A person told me one day, that in a certain city, a one-handed fellow, by rubbing his stump with a particular kind of oil, caused a new arm to shoot out, just as a lopped tree shoots out new branches. I smiled, as you may suppose, at the story; on which the relater affirmed, with some

acrimony, that he had himself seen the lamp which held the oil : to which I replied, with as much coolness, that I had not seen the arm.

But to return to our giants. The public of this metropolis had long given over all thoughts of such phantoms, and were busying themselves in the arts of peace, or diverting themselves with plays, operas, and other fashionable amusements, when, about the middle of July last year, the English, born to be the common disturbers of mankind, gave out, that some of their sailors, newly arrived, had actually seen these tremendous giants. Mere news-paper lies, said we ; and many pleasant jests were made on the occasion. A taste for jesting is a good thing,

thing, and is in general the characteristic of a good-natured people, who love to laugh, even though they are miserable : besides, who does not know that it is the business of newspapers to insert all the flying reports they can pick up.

At this time, however, you, Sir, a grave doctor, the secretary of a celebrated society *, that does not listen to popular tales, were pleased to communicate this discovery to one of our literati †, and, by his means, to our academy of sciences ; which, like yours, weighs facts in the rational balance of Montaigne. As you had been long

* The Royal Society of London.

† Monf. de la Condamine.

known in our literary world, the public listened, and all Paris was staggered. But what followed? In a certain Journal *, which disputes the pre-eminence with yours †, was inserted the extract of a letter from Mons. de la Condamine, and your apparition of the giants at once vanished. I have sent you that extract, but think proper to lay it before you again, on account of the comment it requires.

“ I have just now learned that the story of the discovery of the Patagonian giants is merely fabulous; and

* Le Journal Encyclopedique.

† Le Journal Britannique; which was continued too short a time, but will be long admired, as its discontinuation was regretted, by the learned.

that the English gave out the report, only to cover the design of fitting out four ships, which they sent to that country, for the working of a mine, which they have discovered there. I am afraid my friend doctor Maty hath too readily given credit to this piece of news. Our ministry cancelled the article, when it was going to be inserted in the Gazette de France; depending on the relation of M. de Bougainville, who, having touched on those parts, had some intercourse with the Patagonians, traded with them, and affirms them to be of the ordinary size. It is true that M. de Bouganville visited but one part of the coast; but then a whole nation of giants, nine feet high, is a thing very difficult to be believed.

Several things are added to Dr. Maty's narrative, such as the captain's name, &c. &c."

You see, my dear doctor, that we know the secrets of your government better than you, who have given into a popular report, calculated merely for the vulgar, and to impose on foreigners. It was thus your Methodists, three or four years ago, thought to reap great advantage from the apparition of the Cock-lane ghost, which made so much noise among the populace. I made some scruple, however, in confounding you with the vulgar. It appeared to me that you and I, who have the honour to be members of a society, which has produced the Philosophical

philosophical Transactions, and so many great discoveries in natural philosophy; which has been the school of a Halley and a Newton; ought to be careful how we bring disgrace on it by encouraging popular credulity.

And yet as mankind are, after all, so subject to error, I thought proper to advise you of what passed in France; and of the little faith we put in the giants, notwithstanding the proclamation you had issued to our literati. At the same time, I begged of you, for the love of truth, an affection truly philosophical, to inform me whether or not you were undeceived.

Surprized at the extract of a letter which had gained so much credit, you
were

were nevertheless so far from discrediting the discovery, that you maintained it by new arguments. You answered, that, without setting up for a knight-errant, in favour of the giants of Magellan, in opposition to the whole world, you could not refuse your assent to the proofs of their existence; that probably your friend M. de la Condamine, afraid to give in to one fable, chose rather to run the risk of asserting another; that there was no reason to suppose this piece of news any artifice of government, to conceal the true object of the expedition of your ships; that your ministry never judged it expedient to amuse a people with idle tales, who keep the key of the treasure spent on all expeditions; that the ship's crew have

have still less pretended to cover the secret of their voyage round the world, by relating that they were sent in search after the giants; that it was by mere accident they saw them; and that your English voyagers assure you, they found nothing in the conversation of those men of nine foot high, which induced them to stay with them more than a few hours; after which they pursued their route for those countries to which they were destined.

After this preamble you proceed,
 “Setting these trifles aside, what is there in the whole but the relation of a simple fact? Can it be believed that so many persons should combine to impose on us, by affirming, that on the East side
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of South America, they saw a company of four or five hundred men, women, and children, taller by two or three feet than us Europeans; that they rode on horses which appeared little, at least in comparison to their own stature? Would they all agree in saying those people were cloathed in skins, and wore necklaces of metal, that their officers put ribbons and other ornaments round their heads and necks? Captain Cummings of the Tamer, a man of six foot two inches high, is said to have measured with one of them, and that when he stood on tip-toes and reached as high as he could, he could but barely touch his forehead. The women and children are said to be less, but of a proportionate size. Again, your voyagers say, that

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in passing through the straits, they afterwards saw other men of a very different make, little, frightful, and almost naked. What they saw they related at their first arrival, and now occasionally repeat it to every one.—I have seen myself (you say) a letter from Commodore Byron, in which he authenticates all the facts inserted in our news-papers, and which have been related to me by one of the eye-witnesses. Is this sufficient, my dear colleague? Justify me if you please, my apology cannot be in better hands.”

I anticipated your desires, Doctor; and, before I received your answer, asked this question in our societies;

What

What is it makes you doubt the truth of this story of the giants?

Is it the letter of M. de la Condamine? If that celebrated writer had examined the fact with as much care and attention as he bestowed in discussing and demonstrating the advantages of inoculation, I should doubt of it, and deny it as well as you.

Is it the persuasion you are under, that the English have spread this report to dissemble the motive of an armament sent on some secret expedition? Diffimulation is only necessary in a state of weakness.

But our ministry struck out the article of the giants, when it was going to be
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inserted in the Gazette.—The ministry have so many things of much greater importance to treat of, that they rightly conceive they may defer the verification of the story of the giants. The Gazette, being silent on this head, leaves the public at full liberty to judge of it as they please.

I am no longer so much surprized at the traditions of Peru, Brasil, and Mexico. Those people assure us that their countries were formerly visited by giants, so tall that an ordinary man barely reached to their knees. If this be exaggeration, it does not appear to be without foundation. But after all, the existence of men nine feet high is said to be incredible, so long as we ourselves, and every body about us, are limited to
between

between five and six. For my part, I reflect, on this occasion, on the cows of Arabia, that are no bigger than one of our calves of six months old; and on those of Ethiopia, which are nearly as big as elephants; on the lap-dogs that our ladies carry about in their muffs, and the wolf-dogs of five feet high, that are seen in Ireland. There is undoubtedly more difference between one of these lap-dogs and an Irish wolf-dog, than between a Laplander and the largest of the Patagonian giants! Why may not this enormous difference of size which obtains in one kind of animals, extend itself in some degree to the human species? Nature indeed hath sufficiently distinguished man from the brutes in his moral character, but hath

left

left many relations subsisting between them in their physical constitution. It is well known that the famous Lyonés produced every year some new species of dogs, and destroyed those which were no longer in vogue, correcting their form and varying their colour at pleasure.

Who knows what might happen among the human species, if individuals were coupled with a view to any proposed end? Every thing is astonishing to those who see nothing but their own home, and are ignorant of the powerful effects of the diversity of climate, air, diet, manner of living, and principally the influence which only a single couple sometimes hath on a whole race, even

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when that couple hath been at first nothing more than a *lufus naturæ*.

It was fuch an accidental diversity that took rife in the person of Elizabeth Horftmann of Rostock, a town in the dutchy of Mecklenburg, who was born with fix fingers and toes. This singularity she transmitted first to her daughter, Elizabeth Ruhen, and afterwards to her grandson, Jacob Ruhen, furgeon at Berlin, till at length it became common in the family, and was perpetuated in a distinct race. It is thus that varieties, being once confirmed by a sufficient number of generations, form a new race of men; and it is thus perhaps that all the different races of mankind have been multiplied. It is necessary, however,
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for us to have seen a great deal to make us admit of things we have not seen.

It is not impossible that, at this very time, some Lapland or Greenland philosopher of four feet high, is labouring to prove to his fellow countrymen, there are no men in the world that are five. He is, of course, still a greater infidel than we, with regard to the Patagonians; because every race of men look upon themselves as the standard of all the rest. It is not always a certain way, however, to judge, from what we know, of what we do not. When Messrs. Trembley, de Reaumur, and Bernard de Jussieu, first told us, not many years ago, of an animal that was multiplied by being cut into pieces, each part shooting out a head and tail

in two days time ; such was the fresh-water polypus ; the public cried out against the delusion ; and the Academy of Sciences, when they saw the prodigy, had some thoughts of putting the key under the door. If our discoveries, indeed, are so trifling in comparison with what remains to be discovered, they ought perhaps to pull down their house. Again, what shall we say of the Zoophytes, the animal-plant, and the animal-flower ?

But without quitting the human species, on which the stamp of the Divinity is the most strongly impressed : “ The impression, says Mr. de Buffon, is varied from black to white, from small to great, &c. The Laplander, the Patagonian,

Genian, the Hottentot, the European, the American, the Negro, though all sprung from the same father, are very far from resembling each other, like brothers."

It is evident, in fact, that the same cause which tinges the Europeans white, the Mulattos yellow, the Peruvians of a copper colour, and the Negroes black; which nourishes men with beards and men with none; which gives birth to men with tails like quadrupeds, in the isles of Mindoro and Formosa; which gives to the Naxians in India, legs as big as the body of other men; and which produces men of seven feet high at Guam *, one of the Ladrone islands;

* See Gemelli, Careri, Dampier, and Cowley.

may certainly produce men of nine
near the Straits of Magellan.

You know, Doctor, this is not the first time the existence of the giants has been contested. D'Herbelot, in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*, says, that under the reign of Nouschirvan Cosroès, there appeared a giant of seven cubits. Herodotus relates that the skeleton of Orestes was discovered, which was twelve feet and a quarter in length. The critics have accused Herodotus and D'Herbelot of an error; nay they have even ventured to scrutinize the giants of the Bible; Goliath, who was six cubits and a palm in height *; Og, King of Basan, whose bed was nine cubits long †; as

* Kings, Book I.

† Deuteronomy, chap. iii. ver. 2.

well as the whole race of giants which astonished the earth with their magnitude and crimes before the deluge*. The commentators have thought there was no reason for taking these measures strictly according to the letter; and that they are nothing more than indefinite terms expressive of extraordinary magnitude.

I pass over the skeleton of Orion, found in Candia, according to Pliny, forty-six cubits; as also the body of the giant Anteus, which Sertorius, as Pliny relates, caused to be dug up in the town of Tanger, and measured sixty cubits. Facts of this kind must have given great pleasure to Mr. Henrion, of the Aca-

* Genesis, chap. vi.

demey des Inscriptions & Belles Lettres.

“ This gentleman laid before the Academy, in the year 1718, (observe it is the secretary who speaks this in his eulogy on the deceased) a chronological scale of the different sizes of mankind from the creation of the world to the birth of our Saviour. In this table, Mr. Henrion assigns to Adam the height of 123 feet 9 inches and $\frac{3}{4}$; from which he established a rule of proportion between masculine and feminine stature in the ratio of 25 to 24. But he presently deprives human nature of that majestic size. According to him, Noah was twenty feet shorter than Adam. Abraham was but twenty-seven or twenty-eight at most. Moses was no more than thirteen. Hercules but ten. Alexander the

the Great hardly six; and Julius Cæsar but five. And though it be long since great men were compared by personal magnitude; yet if Providence had not deigned to suspend the progress of such a prodigious diminution, we should at this time of day have hardly made any figure, at least in this respect, among the present race of insects of any distinction *."

There are besides some people so prepossessed that they will not hear of any other fact, after one hath been acknowledged false. It is well known, for example, that those enormous bones, which were exhibited at Paris, in 1713, and were afterwards shewn all over

* Mem. de l'Acad. tom. v.

France and England, as the bones of Theutobocus, spoken of in the Roman history, were no other than the bones of an elephant. But does this authorise us to deny the existence of men of extraordinary magnitude? What, if a mountebank should gull the multitude, by shewing a negro whose skin he had made white, would it thence follow that in the middle parts of Africa there are no white negroes?

The bones spoken of in the journal of William Schouten, the Dutchman, deserve some attention. He relates, that being at Port Desire, on the coast of Magellan, he found, on the mountain, several heaps of stones that excited his curiosity. They were piled up over
human

human skeletons, from ten to eleven feet in length. There was no likelihood of these being places of sepulture for sea monsters. A sensible, unprejudiced man, however, would say at least with a modern historian, who has declared open war against all printed lies, "The magnitude of the Patagonians, near the Straits of Magellan, has been exaggerated; but they are nevertheless believed to be the tallest nation in the world."

Nothing farther remains then, doctor, than to ascertain their stature; which is what your navigators have done. Nine English feet, reduced to French measure, are no more than eight feet three inches. Let us be satisfied with this;
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it is pretty well. A new difficulty, however, arises even from this admeasurement. The judicious critics say, that the ancient and modern eye-witnesses of our giants do not agree about their stature; some giving them eight feet, others nine, some ten, and others again eleven, and even twelve: an evident sign of error and imposture.

M. Frezier, whom I have already quoted, pretends that all the measures of the different countries that have been used on this occasion, may be reduced to about nine or ten French feet, sometimes less, and very seldom more: so that the stature of our giants may be settled to be between eight and
ten

ten feet, as that of ordinary men is between four and six.

The disbelievers of the existence of the giants have recourse to that excellent natural history, which your island would be proud to number among its productions. The author, in his remarks on the giants of Magellan, expresses himself thus: "As the relations which mention them are full of exaggerations on other subjects, it may be doubted whether in fact there exists a race of men all composed of giants, particularly when they are supposed to be ten feet high; for the quantity of matter in the body of such a man would be eight times that of a person of ordinary size. Add to this, that if
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the giants of Magellan do really exist, they must be very few in number; for the inhabitants of the coasts in the Straits and the neighbouring isles are savages of a middle stature."

This is what M. de Buffon might very sensibly advance at the time in which he wrote. It is certain that the ignorant believe every thing without examination; that the half-learned impudently deny every thing; and that men of real genius suspend their judgment concerning phænomena that are not absolutely contrary to the general laws of nature. The man must be an ass, who could believe in the Vampires. But here I see a philosopher who investigates nature, but not discovering its limits,

limits, is equally cautious of admitting what is not, and of denying what is ; who is inquisitive, and listens to the report of those who have had ocular testimony. Could he do better than to remain in doubt ? He could not divine, in the year 1744, that the English navigators in 1766 would confirm and elucidate the former relations.

If, according to the rules of criticism, we ought to give credit to the affirmation of such a considerable number of eye-witnesses as the crews of two ships of war, sailors, soldiers and officers ; all of whom unanimously depose to the time and place in which these giants were seen, to their stature, dress, ornaments, behaviour ; who measured

fured them, and had no interest in telling a lie; we are under equal necessity to admit the existence, not of a few gigantic individuals, as are sometimes shewn at our fairs, but of a whole race of such people; for a company of five hundred giants, men, women and children, encountered by chance, and which were not assembled for a shew at a fair, must be owned to form a race sufficiently considerable, and probably but a part of a great people.

The rule which M. de Buffon lays down for the limits of nature in the human species is just, with respect to the greater part of the world. A race of giants existing in one corner of America, form but a very slight exception.

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The strongest objection, doctor, and which you may not expect, is to be deduced from a French relation, which you are a stranger to, as are also as yet even the public at Paris.

It is this: Last year, 1766, two French frigates set out, the 31st of May, from the Malouine islands, where M. de Bouganville was forming a settlement. Toward the middle of June, one of them came to anchor in Gregory bay, the other in Famine bay. The first, named l'Etoile, was commanded by M. de la Giraudais, who gives this relation: the captain of the other was named M. du Closguyot. Their errand was to cut wood in the Straits of Magellan, as they had found neither wood

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nor

nor inhabitants on the Malouines. M. de la Giraudais having anchored under Cape Gregory, took his shalop and boat ashore, with thirty of his crew. The Patagonian savages, very large in stature, came immediately down, to the number of twenty, increasing presently to fifty, and at length to seven or eight hundred, men, women and children. M. de Giraudais, who did not expect so great a multitude, was furnished only with ten muskets, and a few presents, too little in quantity to conciliate the good-will of the savages. He judged it expedient, therefore, to return on board; taking with him such of his people as he could not provide with arms, intending to send them back

back immediately with arms and presents.

The twelve men whom he left behind with the ten muskets, were a little embarrassed, as to what might be the consequence in case the savages should take it into their head to attack them. They were encouraged, however, by seeing that they kept their wives and children with them, whom they would hardly expose to a combat. Night coming on, they spent it as agreeably as they could, round a fire they had lighted, still keeping on their guard, for fear of a surprize. At break of day the savages, excepting about a dozen, retired; taking with them their wives and

children to their habitations. This day was spent in looking about the coast for shell-fish. In the evening the principal of the savage chiefs persisted in conducting the French to his camp. They went with him, for fear of betraying too much distrust by a refusal. At the repast which was offered them, they were surrounded by the savages; their meal consisting of the marrow of the vigone, an animal somewhat between a sheep and a goat, but much larger and stronger, resembling the camel in form, and the deer in colour. The savages frequently sung during the repast, but in a manner so terrible, that they seemed to utter the cries of bloodshed and horror, rather than expressions of

of jollity and pleasure. The disturbance increased, when, looking upon the muskets, they gave to understand, by signs, that their forefathers had been killed or wounded by them. One of their chiefs in particular, with an haggard look and ill-omen'd countenance, foamed at the mouth, while he pointed to the muskets, and seemed to abuse the principal chief, for treating such kind of guests with so much humanity. The latter, doubtless, pleaded in behalf of the French, as he wept during the conversation. In the mean time, M. de St. Simon, an officer of the Malouine colony, gave orders to three or four of his company to fire upon the first that offered to attack them ; giving

the savages to understand that he was going to put himself in a posture of defence. It is possible that this putting on a fierce countenance, added to the good-will of the first chief, saved their lives. In the morning the shallop, so much desired, arrived, bringing a recruit of provisions and presents, which were distributed among the savages, and set them perfectly at ease. They were apparently something accustomed to trade, as they offered to make exchanges with several of the ship's crew. They seemed to be most fond of tobacco, brass, red and blue paint, knives, hatchets, and handkerchiefs. Their women were very fair, and even handsome and modest ; though their husbands

husbands seemed to care very little about their modesty; very liberally beseeching the Frenchmen to make love to them. They tie up their hair, and carry their children in a kind of wicker baskets, greatly ornamented, and seem to doat on them amazingly. They have very fine horses, and a number of dogs for hunting; rambling about, without fixed habitation, from one place to another. Their house, or rather their tent, is formed by placing four long poles in a line, and stretching from the top horses skins, fastened to four short pegs near the ground. This is a kind of oblique wall, which they oppose to the wind. They have a first chief, whom they call Capitan; and under

him they have seven or eight others, who have command over a certain number of men.

Their dress is a long mantle, about six feet or six feet and half long, made of the skin of the vigone.

The arms they use in war is the *stunner*, a rope made of dried gut, above six feet long, armed at the end with a round stone, like a bullet, extremely hard.

Their other weapon for the chase is also a cord of the like nature, armed at each end with a similar bullet. One of these is held in the hand of the hunter,
 who

who gives this kind of sling a circular motion over his head, and then flings away the whole. The first bullet strikes the animal directly, and the other twists round him by means of the cord; the hunter seldom missing his aim; because not being accustomed to fire-arms, they are obliged to acquire a greater dexterity of hand.

I have seen these two arms, with the mantle, at Paris, at the house of M. d'Arboulin, who is so obliging as to gratify the curiosity of those who desire to know something about men of all countries.

As to the stature of these Patagonians, which is here the capital point,
the

the shortest size is of five feet seven inches, and the tallest six feet and an half; the mean or common height being six feet. Such I am told are the giants which have made so much noise in the world.

But how shall we reconcile the different accounts given by the English and French? Let us try.

Patagonia is so extensive a country, and so little known! The old relations don't agree in placing these tall men in the same district. Perhaps, in time, stranger things may be discovered there. You Frenchmen have only seen men of six feet to six feet and a half, on the coast,

coast, in Gregory's Bay. The English admit the truth of your relation; why therefore do you contest their having seen others of nine feet at the point towards the East? May not the savages you saw at Gregory's Bay, be a degenerated race of the giants of the East? And in that case, the observations of both will be true.

The wish of M. de Maupertuis, in his Philosophical Letters, under the article Patagonia, seems now to be fulfilled.

“ It is by no means, says he, giving into visionary tales, nor a ridiculous curiosity, to say that the country of the Patagons,

Patagons, situated at the Southern extremity of America, deserves to be examined. So many credible relations make mention of these giants, that it cannot be reasonably doubted, that there are to be found in this region, men of a stature very different from ours. These men doubtless deserve to be known."

The same philosopher, in his enquiry after the reasons why dwarfs and giants are found only towards the poles, proceeds thus in his conjectures. "If what is told us by travellers to Magellan, and to the northern parts of the world, be true, the giants and dwarfs have been settled there either from the convenience of climates, or rather because
that,

that, when they first appeared, they were driven into those regions by the rest of mankind, who were afraid of giants or despised pygmies."

But let us overlook the pygmies, to take a view only of the giants. When the news of their existence spread itself, last year, over Paris, a certain young lady, of eighteen, observed, that "the English ought to have
 "brought one of them over, and then
 "there would have been no objection
 "to their existence." Yes, it was answered, but how if the giants did not chuse to come? "Then, said she, they
 "might have killed one, and brought
 "over his skeleton." This young lady
 was

was by no means of a cruel disposition; but, knowing no use a giant could be of in society, she looked upon him in the light of a noxious animal. The world hath much the same aversion for great geniuses, which make others appear so very little. I would have them banished to the poles, as more than once hath been the case. At Athens it was done by ostracism, and in other places by other means.

In pursuing this conjecture, it may be remarked, that if in countries, anciently peopled with men of an ordinary size, there exist no longer a race of giants, it is because the general interest would not permit of their multiplication. At pre-

sent you have in London a gigantic hatter, who cuts a distinguished figure in your Lord Mayor's shew. Let there be looked out a giantess for him ; some of which have also appeared in Europe ; and let them be placed in a solitary insulated district, where they might live at their ease unmolested. From such a cohabitation I foresee you would soon have children of a stature analogous to their parents, and in time families and a whole race. Among this race also, might there not be found some peculiar effort of nature, some slips larger than the rest, which, by being coupled in like manner, might leave even their original race below their posterity ? I may ask all the naturalists in the world to point out

out the limits at which they would stop.

What becomes now of the sober gigantology of your Sir Hans Sloane, which is read with so much delight in the Philosophical Transactions? He has refuted the existence of giants. What would he have said to your countrymen, who could tell him they had actually seen them? This is not the first instance, however, in which the learned have precipitately set bounds to nature, without her consent. But as you were so much attached to the giants, you would have done well to have prevented the publication of an English piece of pleasantry,
which

which I have just read, on the subject. You doubtless have seen it, under the title of an *Account of the Giants*, &c. That ingenious satire on the British administration, the real and only design of the author, who only embraced that opportunity to serve his country agreeable to English liberty ; that satire, I say, did the giants no injury in London ; but it hurt them greatly at Paris : and we returned you on that occasion what you owed us on another.

At London you would not believe in our wild beast of the Gevaudan ; but engraved ludicrous prints of it, for your amusement, while we suffered under its devastation. Why should we treat your

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giants

giants any better than you our wild beast? Besides, as I told you at the beginning of my letter, we are cured of our taste for the marvellous, which has so often deceived us. We resemble now a party of revolted slaves, who, having broken their chains, are more outrageous than men of real courage. We now despise even to examine any thing.

But with regard to you and me, Doctor, who examine into things, and are convinced on sufficient evidence, let us make some few reflections on these rascals. M. de Maupertuis, in wishing to have their existence verified, had a more philosophical end still in view.

“ The

“ The magnitude of their bodies, says he, may perhaps be the least object worthy of observation. Their ideas, their knowledge, their history, may be much more worthy our curiosity.”

If it be true, as I am informed, that your admiralty have fitted out the Dolphin to prosecute the discovery, we shall probably know. I am too impatient, however, to wait its return, an odd thought having struck into my head; which is to write their history before I am furnished with materials. And perhaps this is not the only history that has been written under the same circumstances. I shall set about describing their manners, institutions, police, laws, go-

verhment, their manner of living, their arts, and even building them a capital. Every one ought to be permitted to indulge his imagination freely, provided he transgresses not the bounds of probity.

In the first place, Doctor, do you think a Patagonian is fabricated as men of five feet high are at Paris or London? No; it is not with corrupted manners, a debilitated constitution, and a body diseased from excess and debauchery, that a Patagon approaches his mistress, but with virtuous manners, a sound constitution, and those sentiments which formed the union of hearts during the innocence of the golden age.

During the pregnancy of the female, every object is kept from her that might give her uneasiness. She is awakened by the sound of some musical instrument; her taste is consulted in her amusements; and her mind is enlivened with joy, without suffering her powers to grow sluggish by inactivity. These, on the contrary, are kept up by walking, or some kind of husbandry work which is agreeable to her. The Patagonians doubt not the influence of the mother over the physical, and perhaps moral constitution of the child: they see that a sound and vigorous tree bears fruit as surprizing for its bulk as its quality. The young Patagonian comes into the world, is suckled by its

mother ; no other person, in the opinion of that country, being capable of discharging that sacred office of nature, equally necessary for the preservation of both mother and child. The people of that nation are not desirous of having their children feeble, crippled, bandy-legged, knock-kneed, or rickety. If any family among them, like a sickly nursery, should happen to grow deformed and stunted, it would be soon obliged, from its disagreement with the general population, to seek an asylum in the desert ; where it might possibly form a degenerate race of feeble savages of five feet.

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To prevent this misfortune, they are very careful not to confine the circulation of the blood and humours, or the motion of the limbs of their children. They never wrap them up in swaddling clothes. This lesson they learned from the brutes. The lusty baby, left at liberty like a puppy, scrabbles about a room covered with mats, where nothing can hurt it. This is its cradle. In a short time it springs forward to meet the nipple, which affords it nourishment, fastening itself to it, by clinging with its knees and feet round the hips of the mother; who continues her usual employment while it sucks, without affording it any assistance with her hands. In like manner it scrabbles after

any fruit or vegetable that is thrown to it on the mat. In a short time it gets upon its feet, and is led twenty times a day into the middle of a meadow, where it breathes a pure air, and may run and tumble about without danger. It has no other leading-strings than its own strength, which it is necessary for it to exert and increase. The Patagonians do not fortify their children with pads and puddings, to prevent their suffering by a fall. As they are human beings, the parent is willing they should learn to suffer, and prevent future accidents by their experience. Their heads are always bare, in order to arm them against rheums, defluxions and contusions, by hardening the bones of the skull.

skull. They always go bare-footed also, because some time or other perhaps they may not have time to put on their shoes and stockings, to avoid being burnt in their huts, and because they will stand firmer on the side of a precipice on their own skin, than on the tanned and slippery hides of beasts. The rest of their bodies are lightly and loosely cloathed; without any ligaments or garters, to occasion a stagnation of humours. They are by degrees accustomed to bear the heat of the sun, the humidity of the rain, and the severity of the cold. Every day, that of their birth not excepted, they bathe in cold water, even when it is covered with ice. The Patagonians, without being great physicians, are

are not ignorant that the motion of the blood, being more rapid in infancy, is sufficient to keep them warm, and that the cold reaches no further than the skin.

At the same time, as they are prepared to resist the intemperature of the weather, their senses are accustomed also to all those striking phænomena of nature which are attended with terror; their eyes are used to see, and their ears to hear every thing. Is the sky troubled? Are the winds loud? Does the storm roar? They are led into the middle of a garden; their parents dance round them, and admire the flashes of lightning, as we do the reports of musquetry.

query. They count the claps of thunder, as we do the report of the cannon at a public rejoicing; and when it is over, are displeased they hear no more, and go in doors only because the shew is at an end. A young Patagonian will some time or other be told, that lightning is capable of killing, as really happens once or twice a year; that a man is crushed to death by the fall of a tree, a rock, or a house: but this is not the time for talking but doing. They take care not to keep him always sitting or lying: when they have a mind he should move, they set him upon his legs.

As he daily grows in size and strength, the father, ever his tutor,
takes

takes the advantage of every thing that may add to his force, agility and address. Any thing that he likes for breakfast is hung up in a basket upon a tree; to obtain which, he must either knock it down with a stone flung from a sling, or with an arrow, or must climb the tree. If he be particularly fond of any vegetable, it is planted in the ground, and he is obliged to dig it out with a spade. If he chooses a bird to play with, he must hunt it down; if a companion for his sports, he is separated from him by a ditch, which he is obliged to leap over. At another time it is necessary for him to climb over a wall, to get at his mother. His father is perhaps preparing for the chase, and he is

is eager to follow him : if he is permitted to go, the father takes him to the foot of a mountain, pushes on before him, over rocks and through briars, leaps from point to point, returns, and finds him following.—Come on, my boy, do like your father. A very Chiron he, educating an Achilles. In like manner, he teaches them to carry burdens, to know the use of the lever, to cleave bodies, to lift weights, and to make use of his left-hand as well as his right.

The system of education among the Patagonians is altogether gymnastic ; continually fortifying the fibres by constancy and dexterity of exercise, strength.

strengthening the muscles, adjusting the organs to the objects of their respective action, giving them equal pliability and resistance, and accustoming the body to do and to bear every thing.

Have not you taken it into your heads, Doctor, to be in England something of Patagonians? You plunge your children, soon after their birth, into the Thames, as Thetis did hers in the Styx; a salutary bathing, which you often repeat. You don't wrap them in swaddling-clothes; and instead of the Huffer and Pierrot dresses, which so prettily confine ours, you give yours large ordinary jackets, and let them go
bare-

bare-headed : thus, at least, I have
 seen your nurseries playing, running and
 leaping about St. James's Park. But
 what is worse than all this, I remember
 that, in my voyage to Italy, I met with
 commodore Harrison at Genoa ; who
 had the politeness to invite me to see
 his squadron. The ship he commanded
 was itself a curiosity, being the Centu-
 rion, that had been round the world,
 braved so many storms, and so much
 alarmed the Spaniards, when it was com-
 manded by admiral Anson. In the midst
 of our conversation in the great cabin,
 there came in two boys, covered with
 sweat and tar, like true swabbers : they
 saluted the captain with an air of confi-
 dence and almost familiarity ; on which
 I asked

I asked him who they were. "One of them, says he, is nephew to admiral Hervey and lord Bristol, and the other belongs to me."——And what is their first station? "That of a sailor, and so upwards, till they arrive at a command."——They left us, to run up the masts. This is surely something like the Patagonians.

You will tell me, perhaps, that in this manner were educated in our country Du Casse, Jean Bart, and Du Guertrouin; men whose strength of mind was answerable to that of their body: but these were Patagonians without family, and without consequence.

I should

I should be more embarrassed, if you should object to me Marshal de Saxe, who could have personally beaten a boxer, as well as he conquered in the field. Possessed of the force, as he had the presence, of the God of battle, you would doubtless do him the honour of a rough and laborious education. It is indeed certain that he came from the North. The children of the South doubtless require to be treated, like their parents, with all tenderness and delicacy.

As to the moral institutions of the Patagonians, they are all calculated to promote the social virtues. In this vast university the professors don't content

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themselves with saying to the pupils, "be just, humane, generous, grateful, patient, laborious, temperate, obedient to the laws, the magistrates and your prince." They are put daily to the practice of such virtues. If a pupil borrows any thing, he is made to return it on the day appointed. If another wants any thing, the person who can spare it, is required to give it him. If any one has received a favour, and appears insensible of it, or conceals it, he is immediately to be noted. If any one falls sick, and is meek and patient, every body is kindly solicitous to assist and serve him; but if he is peevish and impatient, he is furnished with bare necessities. No one is permitted

to

to do himself justice ; but if the strong takes upon him to insult the weak, his punishment is very severe. They have judges appointed even among the youth themselves, to determine all cases of injustice and dispute. A prince is also appointed, emblem of him who commands the nation ; the school of love and obedience. The book which they read most is that of the laws ; which is applied in miniature to the institution of youth. In the neighbourhood of the college is a large field, which all the pupils cultivate at stated hours, in order to inure them to labour, and instruct them in the nature of the earth and its productions. In the hours of

avocation and amusement they sing heroic songs, in honour of those Patagonians who have afforded illustrious examples to their country : no other ideas being inculcated in the youth, than those which are deduced from nature and the public welfare.

The Patagonians have no traditions about ghosts, forcerers, significant dreams, horoscopes, fatal days, or unlucky numbers. For this reason their children are never troubled with imaginary apprehensions. Real dangers are only told them, that they may learn to avoid them. They are told, this horse being stronger than you, may run away with you ; learn therefore to manage him.

him. A wild beast may possibly pursue you ; learn therefore to defend yourself, or run faster than it, climb up a tree, or attack and kill it. This boat, which bears you over the water, may happen to overset ; nay it is possible you may be in a situation where you will have neither bridge nor boat ; or perhaps you may see one of your brethren carried away by a torrent, and be desirous to save him ; learn then to swim. The same instructions are given to the young female, concerning those dangers to which both sexes are liable, in order to diminish them as much as possible.

The Patagonians have a metropolis more extensive than the greatest city in Europe ; but it is by no means so populous.

It is divided by a fine river ; across which are bridges of a great length, and prodigious elevation. The Ediles, through want of taste, had permitted the building of houses on those bridges, but their posterity has pulled them down, nothing favouring there of the magnificence of the arts. Every thing, however, is convenient : the streets are broad, neat and regular ; the markets are extensive and numerous ; conduits properly disposed, furnish every part
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of the town with plenty of water; while the public baths, immense edifices, which serve at the same time to decorate the city, supply every body with the conveniencies of cleanliness and health.

Being persuaded that large cities, in which men swarm together like bees, are destructive to mankind, which always either degenerates or is destroyed there, they have brought the country into the city; which contributes greatly to its salubrity. Thus the houses are built separate, and are but one story high, with a park and garden allotted to each. These houses are made of wood; the sides of which being very

thick, are constructed of great beams well joined together; notwithstanding they have quarries of stone in abundance. To these however they object, that stone and mortar are very subject to exude a moisture, which occasions a continual transpiration of imperceptible vapours, which in time affect the stomach and nerves; of which they are particularly careful. Stone, therefore, is made use of only in the construction of public edifices.

Every thing that may corrupt the air is carefully removed. Thus certain charitable but ignorant Patagonians had built hospitals in different parts of the city; but finding that such quarters
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of the town were more sickly than the others, they removed the hospitals out of the walls ; by which means even the sick themselves found an advantage in their more speedy recovery. At the same time, an order of regulation was made, that no two patients should lie in one bed, much less five or six. This they thought inhuman, in the very exercise of humanity.

Some Patagonian travellers had brought home a foreign malady, which was so far naturalized among them, that it carried off a seventh part of the nation. Many fruitless attempts had been made to destroy its virulence ; at length a method was thought of to
remove

remove its fatality, by communicating the distemper, after a proper preparation of the subjects. Seven or eight successful experiments in the metropolis brought the practice in vogue, and a new hospital was erected for those who might be desirous of securing themselves or children from the danger.

The Patagonians are acquainted only with natural medicine ; too little enlightened to penetrate into systems and forms, they have never studied that of art. Tenacious of their blood, which they look upon as the fountain of life, they say it ought to be purified, not exhausted. Every individual is, with the assistance of diet and a few simples,
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the physician of his own family, as Cato was of his ; and if ever he finds himself at a loss he calls in his neighbours. The Patagonians might indeed very easily console themselves for their ignorance in medicine, if they knew that no proficiency hath been made in it for these two thousand years past. They proceed not by system but observation ; that part of physic which is held in most esteem by them being the Hygiene, which prevents diseases, by means of exercise, temperance and alacrity.

As to the general term of the duration of life among the Patagonians, to judge by the common rule that every
 animal

animal lives six or seven times as long as he takes in growing to his full size, it is to be presumed that as these great bodies keep growing till thirty, their extreme point of old age is about 210; at which time their strength fails, and their senses decaying, they generally die without regretting the loss of life; because, according to them, life consists only in action and enjoyment. An ill-directed piety towards the dead, to whom the place of their interment is certainly a matter of indifference, occasioned the Patagonians formerly to bury them within the walls of the city. But it was represented, that the corruption of the dead bodies might infect the living, and that though the fact were not
strictly

strictly demonstrable, yet the probability of it was sufficient to authorize the means of prevention, in a case of such great importance. The principal tribunal, therefore, viz. that of health, published a prohibition, which was greatly commended, because it was executed. It had better perhaps have ordered the bodies of the dead to be burnt, as was done in ancient Rome with the bodies of Adrian, Trajan, and the two Antonines, doubtless as considerable personages as any of the Patagonians. On the whole, however, the principal point in view was the removing the infection from the city.

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The Patagonians, who are not fond of being buried alive, were terrified, about a century ago, by some dead people, who came to life again; and immediately began to inquire of each other, what were the certain signs of death? On which it was determined, that the only undoubted sign was putrefaction; after which, instead of burying the bodies within 24 hours, they delayed the interment till the appearance of that sign. The error was of long standing; but in that Colossal nation, which has more coarse good sense than refined wit, time does not consecrate error.

At

At a certain season of the year they live altogether upon fish and vegetables, in order to give the animals time to regenerate and repair their species. In favour, however, of weak constitutions, the hospitals are permitted to sell animal food, under a regulation with regard to the price and quality.

Are you desirous of knowing in what manner a Patagonian may live in a capital city, thus built and regulated? I will tell you. A Patagonian, even of the first condition, rises and goes to bed with the sun. In fine weather, he breathes the pure air, and enjoys the freshness of the morning, with health and pleasure to attend him. The fields
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and the groves, embellished by Aurora, the trees crowned with flowers or fruits, the most delightful verdure, the playful herds, the murmuring streams, that seem to wind with pleasure about them, the birds that hail the return of day, all nature, which awakes in smiles, diffuses a pleasing serenity over his soul, and imparts the balm of life to his heart.

Not a day passes in which he does not exert himself in some kind of labour; often in those of husbandry, and always in the open air. He is sensible that a free air, particularly at a season when it is scented with all the perfumes of nature, is more healthful than

than that of a chamber. If he goes abroad it is always on foot, in order that the whole animal economy may receive the advantage of a motion so necessary to the transpiration of the humours of the body. Neither fogs, frost, nor snow prevent his exercise in winter ; for, being accustomed from his cradle to all the variations and impressions of the climate, he is, as it were, naturally fortified by his own skin.

He has no settled hours for his meals ; but, being convinced by daily experience, that gratification is dependent on desire, he stays till he is hungry, and lives in general more on vegetables than animal food ; because he has re-

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marked

marked that carnivorous beasts and birds are usually very lean. Besides which he has a natural aversion to the killing of animals.

Of all kinds of men that live in a state of society, the Patagonian approaches nearest to the man of nature. Uninstructed in the arts of luxury, he finds that water quenches his thirst. Wine, indeed, is sold by the apothecaries as a medicine, as well as other fermented liquors. He finds that milk refreshes him, and that the most simple viands are nutritious at the same time that they please his taste: he finds the skins of animals a sufficient covering, and that his horse is able to prevent his exhausting

ing his strength with too much walking. By putting on a metal collar and a few feathers he thinks himself made very fine; and in these consists the list of almost all a Patagonian's desires. What he is most passionately fond of, is a domestic life, his wife, his children, their education, and even their noise, his servants, agreeable repasts with his family, sometimes in a wood impenetrable to the rays of the sun, at others in a valley by the side of a purling stream, or at others again on the summit of a rock, from whence he may survey an extensive horizon. Every thing is interesting and pleasing to him while in the midst of his family. He is totally ignorant of the cold visits of ceremony, and makes

none but those of business, humanity, or friendship. His own house is with him always the best, as there he governs, loves and is beloved. Besides, he is not pent up and stifled in his house as we are in ours. A garden, a park, and live stock, are all essential to his happiness. He is susceptible only of the milder passions, feeling no ambition but that of an happiness easily attained by treading the steps of nature. If at any time he is called upon to leave this state of tranquillity to attend to public affairs, as the offices of the state are only burthensome, it is a sacrifice which he makes of his ease to the good of his country; after which he returns to the privacy of his former station as soon as possible,

his

his family being to him an inexhaustible source of amusement.

Not that the Patagonians are without public diversions; they have their circus, their amphitheatres, where their youth dispute the prize at running, leaping, wrestling, the management of the bow, the sling, at carrying weights, and fighting wild beasts. It is there also that the young females display their charms in the most ingenious and forcible manner. They are fine shaped, without having been squeezed in a box of whalebone, or cramped with bars of iron. Such a public day is one of the most delightful of their whole lives; as on this occasion they distribute the prizes, and make

choice of their husbands, who are to be at least eight and twenty years of age, because nature has stated times for its powerful productions. The disparity of condition between families is no obstacle here to any match, all the Patagonians conceiving themselves to be equally noble, or at least capable of ennobling by distinguishing themselves. As to fortune, each individual finds a competency in labour and frugality. The only legal obstacle is a disparity in point of age. Nature, say they, hath for ever separated summer and winter.

You will ask me, perhaps, whether they have any public exhibitions like our comedies, tragedies, or operas. Their

Their opera is without action, and consists entirely in recital and description. They sing of the beauty of the sun, the succession of the seasons, the fruitfulness of the earth, conjugal affection, the annual increase of population, friendship, brotherly love, patriotism, the heroes that invented the plough, the mill, the art of building, language, writing, navigation, &c. &c.

In their tragedies, the persons of the drama usually consist of ancient giants, who wanted to tyrannize over others, because they were taller and stronger. The catastrophe being always consistent with poetical justice, and ending with the punishment of the guilty.

By their comedies it should seem that the Patagonians don't like to laugh at the expence of each other ; but as they have seen little men, so they keep some of them as we do dwarfs in Europe. These they take a pleasure in introducing on the stage, by way of contrast and comparison. Thus, for example, a Patagonian beauty is represented as setting a man of five feet upon her knee, loading him with caresses, and begging of him to reach her some fruit growing on the top of an high tree. The little mortal, who has neither the strength nor the agility of the country, looks up at it but despairs. She gives him an axe to fell the tree ; but alas, he is not
able

able to lift it. A wild beast approaches — Ah, my dear lover, cries the fair Patagonian, defend me: — he takes up a bow, but finds himself incapable of bending it; on which his mistress is obliged to fly, taking her gallant defender under her arm. In another scene, a prize is depending on a leap over a little ditch of water only thirty feet wide; our little man jumps and falls fouse in the middle. Revenge is offered him in a battle with a petty Patagonian, not yet seven feet and half high, who knocks him down the first blow, while the more his antagonist is enraged, the more the spectators laugh at his insignificant resentment.

The

The Patagonians are a little given to despise men of our size, on account of their own majestic stature; but they are kind to them, even while they divert themselves with them. Not that these people despair of having comedies soon in a better taste; for the *beaux-esprits* that have already succeeded in the tragedy and opera, are at present engaged in the improvement of the comic theatre. But as they are whimsical, and violently given to quarreling, it is to be feared that these quarrels will retard the work. There is one advantage, however, attending the expectation of it; and that is, these very quarrels themselves furnish a very high comedy

medy for the entertainment of the public.

What is very singular in the Patagonian theatre, is, that without having read either Vitruvius or Palladio, or seen any models from them, they have constructed their houses in the elliptical form, so well proportioned to the eye and ear, that the spectators may see and hear from the most distant parts of the theatre. The company are seated in the pit as well as the boxes; because the Patagonians say they ought not to make a toil of a pleasure. Their theatres are in general more spacious than ours; that of the capital is immense; and indeed so it ought, to be capable of holding

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ing thirty thousand giants ; which is nearly the number of inhabitants, including the populace ; for the populace partake of all the public exhibitions. The more a people labour, say their magistrates, the more need have they for relaxation ; and a diversion which the populace do not share in, is not a public diversion. Notwithstanding this great concourse, however, there is not the least disturbance either at coming in or going out of the theatre ; because it is furnished with large doors, and is situated in the middle of an extensive square, to which the avenues are proportionably wide and spacious. The architecture is rustic, but has an air of majesty,

majesty, resulting from its height, and the grandeur of its parts.

There are no beggars to be seen in the streets, at the church doors, nor on the highways of Patagonia ; because all the people are employed in agriculture or other useful arts ; and no sooner does any one refuse to work, thinking to live at the expence of others, than he is compelled to enter upon the establishments instituted for that purpose. As to those who are past labour, or cannot work, they are maintained without being put to the blush, by being forced to beg. It is this general labour which constitutes the wealth of particular families, as it does that of the state.

Certain

Certain of finding their subsistence at their fingers ends, whilst labour is universally respected, they are under no apprehensions of becoming too numerous. The more populous they grow, the more land they cultivate; so that the birth of a Patagonian is a constant subject of festivity.

The fear of disturbing domestic quiet, by the rivalship of many wives, hath occasioned the prohibition of polygamy: but in cases of sterility, of habitual malady, or incompatibility of temper and disposition, the law admits of a divorce; but this happens very seldom. As to the children, the state provides for them.

In

In regard to taxes, they are all paid in kind, in the time of harvest, and even in the very spot that produced it. By this means, every one pays in due time ; while this portion of the state, being estimated, not by the extent or quality of the soil, but by its real produce, is always just what it ought to be. Nothing remains but to turn these taxes into money, and pay it into the exchequer ; which being the Prince's business, he takes care of it. Such is the whole system of imposts, and no body finds any reason to complain.

The Patagonians have no foreign trade ; ignorant of every thing but what is necessary, and finding this
 wherever

wherever they want it, they have no idea of the utility of commerce. They have nevertheless cut a number of canals across their country, which seem to indicate them a trading nation; but these are only canals that serve to water the country, at the same time as they afford an easy conveyance from one city to another, and particularly a communication with the capital. If the beauty of a country also is to be regarded, as the sides of these canals are planted with trees, they afford the most natural embellishment imaginable.

The Patagonians are entire strangers to civil dissensions. They are not civilized enough to fight and cut one another's

ther's throats ; but having experienced that foreign wars, though less fatal, had brought notwithstanding a flood of evils on their country, it was enacted in a general assembly of the nation, that for the future they should enter into no wars but such as were merely defensive.

In the mean time, they keep up no standing army in time of peace ; the people being apprehensive that soldiers, always armed and well paid, will by degrees be converted into slaves, ready to obey the call of ambition, and oppress their fellow countrymen. Bred up to arms and labour, every Patagonian is of course a soldier, and capable of defending the land he cultivates.

I

There

There is among the Patagonians one rank of people held in great consideration. This is composed of those who have deserved well of their country, either from a victory which they have obtained, a desert they have cultivated, a morass they have drained, an improvement in husbandry or other useful art, or a remedy they have discovered against some popular disease. These persons are maintained at the expence of the state, and have places of pre-eminence assigned them in all public assemblies. This kind of nobility however is merely personal : their children, no doubt, would be glad to enjoy the same privilege, and be held in equal consideration, without doing any thing ; but necessity obliges

them to labour; so that they endeavour to distinguish themselves by their industry, in order to become noble as their ancestry.

Again, if among the nobility any one of them be found who attracts the more particular regard of his nation, for his superior virtues, or extraordinary talents, he is presented with a collar of topaz, and considerable possessions. Such are the grandees of the nation; and as they are to do the honours of the capital, by providing treats and festivals, they are for the most part great œconomists, in order to be capable of being just, generous and magnificent.

Do you ask in what manner the great pay court to their Prince? They never present themselves before him, but to afford him an opportunity of doing good; so that when he is alone, he is assured that all his subjects are happy, and therefore he indulges himself, with as much pleasure as individuals, in the enjoyments of private life.

He is obliged, however, by the laws, to spend three months of the year in making a tour through Patagonia, to see, in person, whether or not any part of his government be defective. On this occasion he always takes with him his successor; who by this means is instructed in the nature of the country,

try, the people and their employments.

As to the laws, they have been always respected, since the Patagonians have been capable of reflection. They are made in the general assemblies of the nation ; the old ones always remaining in force till they grow obsolete, and are no longer applicable to the times.

The Patagonians were originally neither barbarous nor unjust ; on the contrary, they piqued themselves on their justice and humanity ; and yet they adopted barbarous laws, without suspecting them to be so. They ruined, by the forms of justice, the very people

who demanded justice ; they punished before conviction ; tortured, broke on the wheel, burnt and impaled ; and all because it was the custom. At length an antient Patagonian, an excellent civilian, who had distinguished himself in the magistracy, formed a new code, which was received with great applause. It was intitled, *The good sense of the laws*. I shall just mention some few articles of it.

Before this reformation, there had been several degrees of jurisdiction ; so that it was necessary to gain the same cause three or four times over. This occasioned the clients a long train of uneasiness, and interruption from labour,

to carry on their suits. “ Don’t you know, said the reformer, that the expedition of justice is as necessary as justice itself, and that the judge cannot be too near the matter to be decided ?”

He was heard and attended to ; every inhabited district, town and village, had its own tribunal, from which there was no appeal. Hence also it happened that more disputes were determined by arbitration than by the courts ; and this is what the judges chiefly desired.

Before the reformation, the costs of suit were so accumulated, that most of those who gained their cause frankly confessed that they had better have given up the point in litigation. “ Of

what consequence is it to the client, said the reformer, whether he is ruined by justice or injustice, if he must still be ruined? It appears reasonable to me, that all the officers and attendants of the courts should be handsomely provided for, at the public expence; because, while they are employed in the public service, they cannot cultivate their land. It was therefore enacted that, for the future, justice should be pure and undefiled, as the light of the sun."

Before the reformation, local customs used to take place of the laws; so that it frequently happened that a man, in doing the same act, was right in one place, and wrong in another. "Reason,

son, said the reformer, is uniform: different modes of discipline are not given to the same troops." The laws were then made universal, in like manner as they had universally the same weights and measures ; so that the sharpening trader could lay no snares for the honest purchaser. To crown all, with regard to civil causes, if any party commenced an unjust suit, he was condemned in a certain penalty.

The code respecting criminal affairs had been still more extraordinary. If a crime had been committed, the party accused was thrown into a dungeon, destitute of all the necessaries of life, infectious, dark and unwholesome.

" How

“ How do you know he is guilty ? said the reformer. Ought we not to convict him, before we proceed to punish him ? Imprisonment ought to be secure, but not severe.” At present, my dear Doctor, you who respect reason and humanity, will be pleased to hear that the accused party is as much at ease, freedom excepted, in a Patagonian prison, as in his own house ; having any two friends or relations he chuses to keep him company during his confinement.

Before the reformation, the judges were in no haste to try the accused : his arraignment was delayed by an hundred frivolous pretexts ; so that it was
some-

sometimes a year or two before he saw the sword of justice suspended over his head. “ But if, after all, he should happen to be innocent, said the author of the new code, so long an imprisonment must be hurtful to justice, and to the humanity of the Patagonians.” It was therefore enacted, that every supposed criminal should be tried within one revolution of the moon. A space of time much too long, adds the law, for the ordinary course of things.

Before the reformation, every thing was carried on privately ; the examination, deposition of witnesses, confrontation and judgment ; as if Justice, that majestic queen of the people, was
 ashamed

ashamed of the light. The new Code addresses the judges in these terms. " If the accused is justifiable, you ought to afford him every means of defence, and to reap yourselves the honour of your integrity. As you are but men, you may be subject to prepossession; how do you know but the public may give some ray of light to direct you? A false witness, who might dare to perjure himself in private, may possibly be struck with remorse in the face of the whole nation. An innocent man may from his timidity wear the marks of guilt; allow him therefore council to plead for him. When the life of a Patagonian is in question, if the crime be not as clear as the sun, it should be so clear at least, that
all

all the judges should be unanimous in their sentence." On this the veil of prejudice was rent in twain, the bonds of custom were broke through, and the judges, agreeable to the new method of proceeding, hear causes and pass sentence in publick.

Before the reformation, the judges, in order to extort a confession from the accused, when the proofs were insufficient, made use of the torture. "Don't you perceive, says the Reformer, that the law cannot torture before judgment, that in this case the punishment is certain though the crime is doubtful? And if the unhappy wretch who is thus dislocated, broiled, and torn to pieces, should prove at last innocent, how shocking

shocking is such proceeding to nature and humanity!" The courts were with difficulty prevailed on to give up this point, for fear of giving occasion for criminals to escape: but it happened, during its discussion, that a stout criminal, by obstinately denying the fact, was saved; and a poor innocent, of a feeble constitution, by confessing, in order to put an end to his tortures, was executed. This fact was engraven on brass, as was also the law that abolished the torture.

Before the reformation, capital punishments were common. A number of servants were put to death for pilfering trinkets from their masters; the
consequence

consequence of which was, that the masters, fearful of being held in universal abhorrence, forbore to prosecute their pilfering domestics. We will give them up to justice, said they, if you will be content to inflict a moderate punishment, and they shall then not go and rob elsewhere.

As to housebreakers, and robbers on the highway, no body ever thought of saving them from the gallows; and yet the number of robberies did not decrease. “The law, said the Reformer, hath invented punishments only for the good of society. An hundred stout robbers might, under proper discipline, break up a common, drain a morass,
dig

dig a canal, make a highway, and thus be rendered of service to the state, even in their very punishment. At the same time, these permanent and living examples of justice would have a better effect than the sight of an execution, which is transitory."

Another abuse very prejudicial to the public security, was, that a robber on the highway was subject to the same punishment as a robber and murderer. The Reformer, who ever consulted the first law of good sense, observed on this occasion, "that the law ought to make degrees in punishments as well as there were in crimes; and that it was by leading mankind by degrees, that such great impressions

impressions were at length made on them; as to deter them from crimes." The mere robber, therefore, was condemned to work on the public highways.

The punishment of death was reserved for murder; but a great difficulty attended the determination of the mode of inflicting it. Custom had given the courts a fixed inclination for the most severe kind of punishments, under the notion that the very horror of them would prevent capital crimes. They were confirmed in this opinion by the report of a Patagonian, who, having conversed with a Spaniard among the Chonos, had told them that the enlightened people on the continent of Europe made

use of the like severity. " Heaven protect us from being so cruelly enlightened, said the old Reformer. Men are not to be worked upon by extremes: let us try if their minds may not be as much affected by moderate punishments, as they are now by those which are severe. I am convinced that the latter, without being more efficacious, leave a stain of barbarism on the nation that uses them." Having displayed so much good sense on every other subject, the publick were not afraid of being deceived by him in this. From that time, therefore, they have contented themselves with only drowning murderers; and as the number of crimes have not since increased, they are fully convinced that

excruciating punishments are at least useless. On the day of an execution, which comes but seldom, the terror is so general, that the people shut themselves up in their houses, that they may not see the death of a Patagonian.

All judgments, as I before observed, are without appeal, except in the case of capital punishments: no sentence of death being executed till signed by the hand of the sovereign. The law seems, in such a case, to appeal to him thus; the affair regards the life of a man, and as you are a man, see if it be absolutely necessary to cut him off from society.

A Patagonian financier once proposed, in order to enrich the exchequer, to confiscate the property of a condemned criminal. "Barbarian! said the Prince, are not his wife and children sufficiently unhappy, she, in having such a husband, and they, in having such a father? Wouldst thou have the punishment fall on the heads of the innocent?"

The author of the proposal was accordingly deprived of part of his own property, in order to make an addition to that of the orphan family.

Desertion is extremely rare in this country. The nation engaging in no wars

wars but what are merely defensive, the soldier, attached to his house, his land, his wife and children, defends his own property by defending that of others. It once happened, however, that the soldiers suffered so considerably in a time of war, through the fault of the commissaries, that desertion became very frequent. On which a general officer forbid it on pain of death.

“ We are not afraid of death, said the soldiers, for we risk it daily ; but we abhor oppressors, nor are such worthy to command us.” The general lost his post ; the commissaries were punished, and the desertion ceased. The punishment of a deserter was this ; he was

obliged to walk up and down the camp for three days in the habit of a woman, and then was dismissed the service. Most of the Patagonians would have preferred death to such a punishment.

There is no punishment for detractors; whether it be that there are none to be found, or that no notice is taken of their accusations. Whoever accuses another does it in the face of the law; and if he is guilty of a calumny, is condemned to the same punishment he wanted to have inflicted on the innocent person accused.

What the nation chiefly admires in the new Code, is, that its laws are
simple,

simple, clear, sensible, and precise, having nothing arbitrary in them. The public hardly knew their former laws, which stood in constant need of a comment, and were frequently interpreted contrary ways: an evident proof that they were captious and obscure. As to the present laws all comment on them is strictly forbidden; and at the same time the text is made the catechism of their youth.

Such is the spirit of the Patagonian laws. A certain minister once proposed (no body knows why) to render the magistracy venal and hereditary: to which proposal the general assembly of the nation replied, " They consented,
upon

upon condition that he could establish also the succession of the father's capacity to the son, and make good-sense a transferable commodity." On which the matter ended, as I shall now do my letter; because the more I write, the more corrections I shall have to make, when your ship brings me the genuine materials. Not but that it would be mighty pleasant if I should find no room for correction.

I did not imagine, my dear colleague, that my short acquaintance with the giants would have led me these lengths. Instead of a letter I have almost written a book; at the close of which I wish you neither the Patagonian strength nor stature. Every thing is right, as you
well

well know, in the best of all possible worlds; but I put up for you the prayer of Socrates, and wish you *mentem sanam in corpore sano*. May you long live to enjoy your health and understanding; that understanding of a philosopher, from which your friends and the sciences are both certain to reap advantage. Farewell.

T H E E N D.



